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pact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures each in their appointed place." *

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MORAL SCIENCE AND THE MORAL LIFE.†

WHAT is the relation between Ethics and Morals? This is a question which Ethical Societies are naturally led to ask themselves. When a society is described as an Ethical Society, or as a Society for Ethical Culture, does this mean that such a society intends to study the Science of Ethics, or does it mean rather that it seeks to advance the moral life? Or does it mean both these things? Are these two things naturally connected, or are they not? This is an important question. Different Ethical Societies seem to be answering it in different ways; and, unless some agreement is come to with regard to it, there may be a split in the ethical movement.

I suppose an Ethical Society would most naturally be understood to mean a society for the study of ethical science; and this seems to be the interpretation which some of the English Societies have put upon the term. On the other hand, the American Societies for Ethical Culture appear to be much more distinctly practical in their aims. They seek to improve men's practice much more than to advance their theories. This aim would seem to be more naturally expressed by the term "moral" than by the term "ethical;" unless the Greek word is understood simply as expressing a wider conception of moral life than the Latin one suggests—as including the larger social relations as well as the more purely individual aspects of morality. However this may be, it seems clear that there are, *primâ facie*, two distinct conceptions of the aim of an ethical society; and what I wish now to ask is—How

* Edmund Burke, "Reflections on the Revolution in France." Clarendon Press, Select Works, edited by Payne, vol. ii., pp. 113, 114.

† Read before the Ethical Congress and Convention of Ethical Societies at Chicago, October 1, 1893.

are these two conceptions related to one another? Are the views which they represent incompatible with one another? Are they inevitably conjoined together? Or are they simply distinct? The answer which we give to this question must depend on the view that we take with regard to the relation between ethical theory and moral practice.

Now, if we regard the matter historically, we shall find, I think, that theory and practice have always tended to go hand in hand. When the Sophists and Socrates questioned the current Athenian morality, and began to seek about for some more solid foundation for the moral life, they were at once regarded as corrupters of youth. Their theoretical doubts were seen to influence practice. When Plato attempted a more positive theory of morals, he, in like manner, applied it directly to a reconstruction of all the aspects of practical life,—political, religious, artistic, educational, economic. It is needless to refer to the close union of theory and practice among the Stoics, among the Utilitarians and Evolutionists; or to the fact that the recognized head of the Intuitionist school, Bishop Butler, was at once speculator and preacher—a combination that is found again in the present leader of that mode of thought in England—Dr. Martineau. Other instances will readily occur. It may be thought that Aristotle, and perhaps, also, Spinoza and Hegel, constitute exceptions; and to them I may afterwards return. But the general fact can scarcely be doubted that ethical speculation has had in the past, and still continues to have in the present, a most intimate bearing on the practical life. Nay, even if we turn from these great speculative thinkers to the plainest of plain men, we shall find nearly always that the moral life rests on a more or less consciously recognized theoretical basis. It may be a crude basis. It may be merely the belief that certain obligations have been commanded by God or by a civil government. But even such a belief is a theory; and if this theory should ever be exploded, if the authority should come to be regarded as non-existent, or if its validity should be disputed, the whole moral life which rests upon it may come down with a crash.

Historically, then, there seems to be good ground for believing that ethical theory and moral practice have a close relation to one another. There has, however, in recent times, been a strong tendency to deny this;* and it is this tendency that I wish now to consider. It is a tendency which appears on both sides,—both on the side of theory and on the side of practice. Those who are specially interested in the practical moral life are apt to repudiate ethical theory, and those who are specially interested in ethical theory are apt to insist that their theories have no bearing on practice. It is for these two tendencies that I wish to find the *motif*. Having found that, we may be able to estimate the value of the position to which they lead. We have first to ask, then, why it is that practice repudiates theory, and then why it is that theory repudiates practice.

The former of these two questions is, I think, the more easy to be answered. It is not surprising that those who are specially concerned either with the building up of personal character or with the carrying out of social reforms should look with a little suspicion on "*ein Kerl der speculirt*." History seems to show that speculation has no limit. If it is not a circle, it is an endless screw. The practical worker, on the other hand, "remembers Lot's wife" and presses forward. He has no patience to wait for the settlement of controversies for which an eternity would seem too short. He refuses to go on crutches because theories are lame. Now, as always, the scholastic is one who has leisure; the practical man runs a race. The one must be a born doubter, the other must not even hesitate. What kinship, then, can there be between them? How can the edifice of strenuous endeavor be built on the sands of shifting opinion? It is, I think, such considerations as these that have weight with those who are specially interested in the more practical side of morals. They are afraid to be drawn into disputations that will paralyze the will; they are afraid that "the native hue of resolution"

* Mr. Bradley, in England, and Mr. Simmel, in Germany, are perhaps the two most conspicuous illustrations of this tendency.

may be "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;" and accordingly they stop their ears to the perplexing questions of metaphysics, and walk boldly forward through the darkness, with drawn swords, like Christian through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. They reason like Rob Roy:

"Said generous Rob, 'What need of books?

Burn all the statutes and their shelves;

They stir us up against our kind,

And worse, against ourselves.

* * * * *

— puzzled, blinded, then we lose

Distinctions that were plain and few;

These find I graven on my heart,

That tells me what to do.'"

Now, I am far from denying a certain justification for this point of view. Certainly Faithful should not enter Doubting Castle. He had better leave it to some Great-Heart to storm for future pilgrims. There is a wise division of labor in all such matters. The practical man will find enough to do; and, if he has any genius for action, he will probably find enough principles to guide him. The human race has not been idle all this while. It has accumulated rules and precedents and examples, till almost the very air we breathe is full of moralizing influences, by which the hearts of men may, with hardly even a thought of what they are doing, mould themselves to virtuous action. Men learn conduct, as they learn language or art, or even as they learn to think, quite as much by almost unconscious inspirations as by definitely taking thought; and for some men, and these often among the greatest, it is best to be content with such learning.

"One impulse from a vernal wood

May teach you more of man,

Of moral evil and of good,

Than all the sages can."

Nevertheless, I am inclined to think that the sages can teach a good deal. Nay, I am inclined to doubt whether any of

those impulses would have lain in the "vernal woods" if the sages had not put them there. Not a tree can stir for us now but the thoughts of Plato rustle in its branches. It is the very triumph of ideas to make themselves forgotten, and to become hands and feet. But the best of them serve only for a time. New life-blood must be infused by new thought, or the hands and feet will grow languid. While I admit, then, that men may act well without any conscious theory of conduct, just as they may think well without any conscious doctrines of Logic or Methodology; while I admit, even, that for many men such an unconscious attitude may be "alone complete;" I am yet far from allowing that there can, in the long run, be any good action without thought. The man who does the thinking may be different from the man who catches the inspiration and does the act. The latter may forget the former. He may think that he was taught by the vernal woods or by principles graven on his heart. But I am convinced that in most cases, if you go far enough back, you will in the end come upon a Thinker who whispered it to the woods and carved it on the heart.

I can conceive, however, that some practical persons will still be disposed to rebel against such a doctrine as this. They will say, If conduct is influenced by theory, by which of the theories is it influenced? Was it the Stoics or the Epicureans who gave the woods a voice? Which of the sages, who slandered each other, brought sweetness and light into the world? To any such question I should answer at once, they *all* did. In some ways, any theory of morals is better than none; any one may serve to revivify moral action. There is no genuine theory of morals which has not its roots somewhere in the ideals of human nature; none which does not point higher than custom and conventionality. We are the heirs of the Stoics, and of the Utilitarians, and of the Evolutionists, and of all the rest; and our lives ought to be larger and nobler the more fully we have learned from them all. Not one of them but gives a sting to "*unbedingte Ruh*," and a suggestion of higher achievement. There is not one of them that is not better than our hearts, or than the vernal.

woods, except in so far as our hearts and the vernal woods have caught their inspiration. And this is my answer to those practical persons who repudiate theory. They must either make a theory or plagiarize one. I admit that it is better for some to plagiarize. They could only make *one*, whereas they may plunder a score.

I now pass to the theoretical man. It is not quite so easy to understand why he should want to keep himself apart from practice; and I believe it is only in comparatively recent times that he has had any such desire. Perhaps in olden times there was not the same facility of divorce, and many things lived grumblingly together which have since contrived to separate. But in this particular instance I am inclined to think that what God has joined should not be sundered. Let me try, however, to indicate the reasons which appear to weigh with some modern theorists for their separation between theory and practice.

One reason is perhaps sufficiently obvious. It is natural in some cases to seek to turn the edge of the *odium ethicum* by professing to have no responsibility for the practical consequences of a doctrine. Certainly, the habit of judging men's ethical theories by their supposed results is in general to be deprecated. Perhaps this habit has done more than anything else to repress free thought in England; and it is refreshing when such a writer as Mr. Bradley* bids defiance to this method of prejudice, and boldly insists that he has nothing to do with practical consequences. But this, after all, can only be taken as a warning not to taste unripe fruit. A perfect theory must still in the end approve itself by its works: only we must have patience until we can see its works completely; and perhaps it is in general best that the ethical theorist himself should not be thinking of consequences when he is working out his doctrines. So far as this argument goes, then, it does not point to any real divorce

* "Appearance and Reality," p. 450. On the other hand, I am afraid Mr. Bradley's earlier work, "Ethical Studies," is not free from the defect against which he now protests.

of theory and practice, but only to a postponement of the day of judgment.

A more weighty reason, and one that has influenced many writers, is derived from a view of the general nature of science. Science, it is said, aims simply at knowledge. The object of our knowledge is in no way affected by our knowledge of it. The moral life, like any other object of study, stands there before us. It is the business of the theorist neither to laugh nor to weep over it, but simply to understand it. He should study the moral life, as he studies circles and triangles, taking the object as he finds it, and not seeking in any way to modify it. Spinoza was perhaps the first writer who definitely insisted on this attitude; and his expression of it has probably had a great influence on subsequent thought. Yet it might not be a bad *argumentum ad hominem* to point out that this is not the way in which the science of Ethics has usually been studied,—if, indeed, it has ever been studied quite in that way at all. That is a fact with regard to morals which those who are so fond of facts ought to consider. They ought to ask themselves why it is that morals have not lent themselves to this mode of study so readily as triangles and circles. In truth, Spinoza himself is his own best critic; for no sooner does he get well into his subject than he flies away into the region of ideals with a freer wing than almost any other of his compeers. If we want an instance of cold aloofness in the treatment of morals, it is rather to Aristotle than to Spinoza that we must turn; and perhaps those who recommend the matter-of-fact method of study have usually Aristotle in their minds. To Aristotle, then, let us go.

What do we find in Aristotle? We find, in the first place, that there is no other writer who more distinctly emphasizes the fact that in Ethics we theorize with a view to practice. But it is not on this point that I wish at present to insist. In order to make my point clear, I must begin by drawing a distinction. There are, I think, two ways of studying morals, which may be conveniently distinguished as moral science and moral philosophy respectively. The one sets itself to

study the facts of the moral life as it is actually lived among men, and the opinions that men have with regard to it.* It is a science of what is; or rather of what appears. Its watchword is the Aristotelian *δοξεῖ*. Moral philosophy, on the other hand, is the science of what ought to be, or rather of what, in the deepest sense, eternally is. Now, both of these are to be found in Aristotle; but the former was perhaps the more characteristic of his habit of mind, and has thus come to be that by which he is better known. He was suspicious of the metaphysical flights of Plato, and liked always to fortify himself with facts and with the opinions of the vulgar. It is thus that we get from him so many sketches of Greek virtues and so many indications of current conceptions, which Plato might have been apt rather to scorn or to chastise. Now, certainly these side-lights of the Aristotelian writings are among their most interesting features. They grow in interest, indeed, as the Aristotelian age recedes. Nevertheless, I venture to describe this as the mortal part of Aristotle,—not absolutely the feet of clay in his work, but certainly not the head of gold. The truly immortal part of him is not his moral science, but his moral philosophy; it is to be found in those passages in which he analyzes the nature of happiness and virtue, passages which are not more Greek than English, in which he rises above the mere facts and opinions of his environment, and dwells in the atmosphere of the universal and the eternal. It is by such passages as these that Aristotle has made his mark in the history of thought. Now, it may be said that even in these passages Aristotle does not preach, that even here he does not directly apply his doctrine to practice. And this is true enough. Yet the conceptions which he there unfolds are in their essence not less prophetic than Plato's Idea of the Good itself; they define for us as genuine and as large an ideal, and one that breaks not less absolutely through the conventionalities of the ordinary moral

* By far the best example of this that is known to me in modern times is Mr. G. Simmel's fascinating "*Einleitung in die Morawissenschaft*," of which the concluding volume has just been published.

life. If, then, Aristotle is to be claimed for the matter-of-fact view of Ethics, it can only be with large qualifications.

But there is still another writer who is sometimes thought to support this view—one whose name carries an authority scarcely, if at all, less than that of Aristotle himself. I mean, of course, Hegel. Nothing, perhaps, has helped more to give countenance to the view that Ethics is concerned with particular facts, like any other positive science, than the reiterated protests of Hegel against the setting up of any mere "*Sollen*," anything that is merely an ideal of what "ought to be" as opposed to what is. In his actual treatment of Ethics, also, we seem to find a certain conservatism, a tendency to be satisfied with things as they stand, which gives support to the same point of view. Now, there is some ground for thinking that Hegel was fallible like most other men; but certainly the fact that he gave his support to any idea is a strong *primâ facie* argument for its truth. What, then, do we find in Hegel? The protests against a mere "*Sollen*" cannot be denied; neither, on the whole, can the conservatism of his general attitude. Yet when we remember what grew out of Hegel's philosophy—that it was the rock from which Feuerbach, and Lassalle, and Bakunin were hewn—we shall hesitate to regard it as pure conservatism. And when we reflect a little more deeply on the passages with regard to the "*Sollen*," we shall see, I think, that there has been some misinterpretation of their meaning. What is it that Hegel is there protesting against? It is the notion of a mere Ideal in the air—an Ideal, as he says, that is not strong enough to make itself actual. Against this he urges, with reiterated emphasis, that the Rational is the Real, that the true Ideal is, in the end, that by which the Actual is determined. Hence the "ought" is not a *mere* ought; it realizes itself in history; we may see it without us as well as within us. On the other hand, whatever we seem to see without us that is not ideal, is also not in any final sense actual: it carries its own condemnation in its heart. Now, all this may be true without in any way invalidating the position that Ethics is a science of the Ideal. It only means that it is a science of a true Ideal and not of a

false one. Every true Ideal has a certain actuality : in a sense it is more actual than what we commonly treat as real. It is so even with the ideals of the poet. "The poet never dreams," says Browning :

"We prose folk do : we miss the proper duct
For thoughts on things unseen."

So Hegel would insist that the moralist does not dream : he alone has hold of the true reality : for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of the Ideal everlasting life. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*. The heavens shall wax old like a garment ; they shall change, but righteousness remaineth. This is what Hegel means when he insists that the Ideal is strong enough to make itself real, and is not a mere dream opposed to the actual. He meant what Carlyle meant when he said that "The soul of the world is just." If, in his antagonism to sentimentalism, he sometimes stated his doctrine in a more objectionable form ; and if, in the actual working of it out, he sometimes leaned too much to the side of conservatism ; here also, even more emphatically than in the case of Aristotle, I should say that these things represent only the mortal part of Hegel. In the essence of his doctrine he is a supporter of the Ideal not less strenuous than Green himself.

None of these writers, then, I hold, really gives countenance to the matter-of-fact view of Ethics. And, indeed, if we consider the ground on which it rests, we shall find it to be a mere misconception. It rests on the analogy of the positive sciences. But Ethics, in the proper sense, is not one of the positive sciences. It is a part of philosophy.

Now, the mere positive sciences may be said to study facts, and to seek simply knowledge as opposed to practice ; but this is merely because the positive sciences are abstract. The positive sciences apply themselves to some small department of things ; and they will go fatally astray if they venture to step beyond the limits of what is given to them there.* They

* It is interesting to note, however, that even the particular sciences sometimes show a tendency to revolt against the idea that they are to be bound down to the mere observation of given facts. Thus, it is told of a certain astronomer

will also go fatally astray if they seek (if, for instance, the political economist seeks) to make a direct practical application of the scrappy pieces of knowledge to which they are confined. But in philosophy this abstract opposition between knowledge and practice does not exist. Philosophy is concrete, and it appeals to the whole nature of man. It is not a pettifogging investigation about soap and ether, beetles and solar systems, and other such trifling concerns; but is occupied with the whole constitution and destiny of mankind, with their infinite hopes and ideals, as well as with their very finite achievements. I am convinced that the recent efforts to treat Ethics as a positive science are in the main a mere concession to the modern spirit. The particular sciences are rampant. Their devotees fancy that they are the people, and wisdom will die with them. And no doubt they are wise in their way. But it is a contemptible surrender on the part of ethical students to bow the knee before such pitiful abstractions.

Such a surrender is almost tragic. But there is, I believe,

that, on being congratulated by a lady on the pleasure of knowing all about the movements of the planets, he replied, "I know nothing about the movements of the planets. I only know how the planets ought to move, if there are any planets." But this is evidently a paradox. The ideal constructions of the mathematical astronomer are, in the last resort, of scientific interest only in so far as they approximate to the observed facts of the planetary system. The planetary system is the ultimate ideal to which his constructions must conform, not *vice versa*. Now, this would be the case with Ethics also, if Ethics were simply a positive science. Accordingly, we find that Mr. Simmel, who is perhaps the most consistent adherent of this point of view, maintains ("Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft," Vol. II., pp. 281-85) that ethical ideals have no real validity. They are only methods of *symbolizing* the truths of the moral life. They are, in fact, very much on a par with the ideal constructions of the mathematical astronomer. But there is this unfortunate difference. The movements of the planets can be observed as a hard fact. They exist objectively as an ideal for the astronomer to test his constructions by. The moral life, on the other hand, exists (*as moral*) only in the form of more or less conscious efforts to realize those ideals which the ethical philosopher seeks to construct,—*i.e.*, to bring to clear consciousness. If we deny the validity of these ideals, the moral life becomes a chaos. Mr. Simmel is well enough aware of this sceptical result of his position; and it is only his revolt against speculative philosophy that seems to prevent him from modifying his view of Ethics.

another objection in some men's minds to the treatment of Ethics as a science of the Ideal, which borders rather on the comic side. It is thought that if Ethics is to have a practical bearing, it must be something like the voice of God on Sinai. It must be concerned with the laying down of the ten Commandments, and such things as that; and this would be rather low. Now, I confess I have not quite so lofty a disdain for the ten Commandments and kindred rules of life as some people have. When I find that a man habitually steals and lies and commits adultery, I begin to be suspicious of his morals. Still, I admit that Commandments have to be taken with a grain of salt, and that Ethics would not be good for much if it only laid down these. But why should this be supposed to be the work of Ethics? Can it not be practical without concerning itself with particular rules? When I say that Ethics is practical, I mean merely that it unfolds and analyzes for us the ideal principle of life—an ideal which is indeed forever real, both in the sense that it is the deepest actuality in the nature of man and that it is continually realizing itself in the institutions and habits of social life; but which, though thus forever real, is also forever ideal. It is an "ought to be" that eternally is, an "is" that eternally ought to be. How this "ought" is to apply itself in the particular details of life, is largely a question for individual insight, guided by the long experiment of history. It is not the business of Ethics to lay down particular rules. But the Ideal which it brings to light is that to which all rules have reference, and by which they all must be tried. It is by unfolding this final touchstone that Ethics is practical. This Ideal which it reveals to us, or which it brings to clear consciousness for us, is that which is alone categorical, alone absolutely authoritative in human life. To it all commandments must bow; in it all commandments are absorbed. What is it? How is it to be defined? How is it to be applied? These are the questions to which Ethics must always devote itself. They are not questions of fact: they are questions of that ultimate reality by which facts are judged, in comparison with which all mere facts are but dreams and illusions. They are questions about

that which truly "is," and which *therefore* ought to be; about that which truly "ought to be," and which *therefore* must be.

This is all that I wish to insist on. In insisting on it, on this occasion, I have aimed sometimes rather at an emphasis that may provoke discussion than at an elaborate exactness of expression. I have consequently made some points more paradoxical than they need be; but I trust the general meaning may be sufficiently clear.

I may sum up the general point of view which I have sought to emphasize in the following brief statements: (1) It is no doubt true that Ethics ought not to be regarded as the Art of Conduct. In any complete sense there is no such art. Casuistry is impossible, except within very narrow limits; and such efforts as those of Mr. Spencer to systematize the particular rules of practical life are capable of only a very moderate degree of success. In any case, it certainly seems desirable to separate the application of science to the actual guidance of life from the pure science itself. (2) The Science of Ethics, as distinguished from the Art of Conduct, may be treated in two ways,—as a pure science or as a branch of philosophy. The former is simply positive and has no direct * practical bearing. The latter may be described as normative, and seeks to define for us the ideals which the Art of Conduct must endeavor to apply; just as Logic † defines the ideals of thought, which are applied in scientific research and in the ordinary business of life. The latter kind of Ethics is what is known as "Moral Philosophy;" and it still seems to be the more interesting and important kind of Ethics, even if we admit (as on the whole we must) that the more purely scien-

* Indirectly, of course, this science, like all sciences, may be used to throw light on practical conduct.

† In a sense, *all* philosophy may be said to be normative. Thus, even Mr. Bradley, in his book on "Appearance and Reality," condemns ordinary experience because it does not conform to the law of self-consistency, which he takes as his supreme metaphysical principle. The peculiarity of Ethics, as contrasted with Metaphysics, is that what it condemns with reference to its supreme Norm is capable of being brought into conformity with that Norm. Its Norm thus becomes practical; whereas the metaphysical Norm merely enables us to say that whatever does not conform to it is unreal.

tific study of the facts of the moral life has also its own place and value.

In conclusion, I wish to return to the point from which I started, and apply the view of Ethics which has been stated to the work of Ethical Societies. If the relation between theory and practice is so close as I have sought to maintain, it is needless to inquire too strictly whether an Ethical Society should be specially theoretical or specially practical. No doubt the two sides can be distinguished; and, in a world in which division of labor makes labor more effective, it may sometimes be desirable that one society should devote itself more particularly to the one side, and another more particularly to the other. But it appears to me that the two sides can never be entirely separate. A merely theoretical society, calling itself ethical, would probably end in hair-splitting and self-conceit; a merely practical one, in priggishness and fuss. The counsel of perfection is "Give us both!" To the theorists one might say, "Bring forth fruit, and think not to say, We are Hegel's seed." To the practical man one might say, "Justify the faith that is in you."

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THE SOCIAL MINISTRY OF WEALTH.

It is the aim of this paper to show that the conquest over nature which has been going on for the past hundred years as manifested in the mechanical devices by which the efficiency of labor is marvellously increased, has placed before the present possibilities of which the past had not the slightest conception, and that it lies within the choice of this generation to say whether or not those possibilities shall be realized. That which makes the present full of hope and promise is the abundance of wealth at its disposal, or, more properly speaking, the efficiency attained by the agencies of production. The secret of wealth is that nature serves gratuitously the